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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04.19.2006

Press office: +389 (0)2 308-0446

Cell phone: +389 (0)70 367 547

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

<http://macedonia.usaid.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. and community refurbish abandoned school in Berovo

Spring in Berovo brought more than just good weather this year. An abandoned school building has been fully renovated and some 2,000 primary students, aged 7-14, who previously attended classes in several smaller buildings scattered around the municipality, can finally learn together without distractions.

"The old school building had not been used since 1998 and there was an urgent need for renovation," says Venko Pashaliski, the Mayor of Berovo Municipality. "Having the local community team up with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) enabled the project to be carried out swiftly. I extend my sincere gratitude to the American People for their understanding and support, on behalf of the citizens of Berovo, especially the students." USAID is part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia.

Meanwhile, a new primary school is under construction. Once the primary students move into their permanent school building, the building renovated with U.S. funds is to become a Community Center for training programs, seminars, workshops, summer courses, and possibly a foreign language center. The whole community is expected to benefit from this building in the years to come.

"Since I live near by, I remember what the building looked like before the renovation. It was all in ruins; it was so ugly. Now it looks really nice. It is pleasant to stay in and attend classes," says 12-year old Martin, a sixth grade student.

The Berovo project is financed, in part, by the Municipal Good Governance Fund (MGGF) of USAID's Decentralization Project, which is designed to support Macedonian municipalities as they face the challenges associated with the decentralization process.

The official ceremony for marking the renovation will take place in front of the school building in Berovo on Friday, April 21st, starting at 12 noon.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 20 projects worth \$30 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit www.USAID.org.mk.